

whitehot | November 2012: Dimitri Kozyrev @ Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles



by Eve Wood

For many years now Dimitri Kozyrev's work has been marked by a precise attention to detail and a preoccupation with formal concerns like line, color and perceptual space. With this newest body of work the artist further expands the exteriority of his prismatic vision to include a more intimate interior investigation, and the results are breathtaking. Space is largely a confluence of time, energy and light and Kozyrev's canvases divide, subdivide and reconfigure our perception of space as an integral, interactive component in our human experience of the living world.

Works like the laterally expansive Last one, 17 (all works 2012) confound our gaze in a richly complex visual conundrum wherein the stairs suggest an interior space, though they lead to no "legitimate" landscape and seem instead to suggest a more complicated psychological terrain of shifting walls and descending beams, leaving the viewer alone inside an ever-shifting and unpredictable tableau. Kozyrev's use of the color red here feels psychotic (in a good way) as various shades appear to grow out of each other. Space is divided into blocks of solid and transmuted color and one wonders at the implied narrative presented here. Is this highly charged and evocative nonlinear space the artist's studio?

Other paintings like the more expressive Last one, 1 utilize shapes and forms as stand-in for suggested figures that could possibly occupy the space, however, these alignments are tenuous at best. This painting in particular is fantastically ethereal without appearing sentimental. Again the use of a predominate color, in this case green, draws a direct correlation with the natural world as in the foreground various plants sprout up. The strange figure at the center of the picture plane with Baldessari-like circular head-shape once again transmogrifies the suggestion of a human form with a more mechanized reality; though we move through time and space, and feel ourselves contained within it, we are still only blundering our way through.

The most daring work in the show is also something of a sleeper. Last One, 16 is again suggestive of an implied narrative, or at the very least, a unique fission between a series of provocative shapes that resemble a small child wearing an odd little hat and peering down perhaps at something that will forever elude him -- or it could be nothing at all but pure abstraction. Either way, the balance of color and structure is extraordinary. Kozyrev is wary, as many artists are, of symmetry, and this painting in particular stands as testament to his faith in the unknown, or more precisely, in disfiguring, disconnecting and in some cases even disavowing the known world. Kozyrev is not afraid to push boundaries in every direction, and this approach makes for a wealth of startlingly original forms.

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